

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Career and Technical Education critical to future job creation

February is Career and Technical Education Month

MADISON — Family-supporting jobs of the future will require education and training beyond high school. The February observance of Career and Technical Education Month focuses on the importance of strong partnerships among Wisconsin's technical colleges and high schools so students will be prepared for the emerging occupations of a modern economy.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly one-third of the fastest growing occupations will require an associate's degree or a postsecondary vocational certificate. Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges have a long history of equipping graduates with the knowledge and hands-on experience needed for specific occupations. From biotechnology to electronics, health care, and public safety, Wisconsin's technical colleges provide school-to-career connections that are the backbone of a well-educated and adaptive workforce.

"The training students receive through career and technical education programs is critical to our state's economic recovery and future prosperity," said Dan Clancy, president of the Wisconsin Technical College System. "Our state's 16 technical colleges have forged strong local partnerships with business and industry, as well as beneficial collaborations with area public school districts, to ensure that educational opportunities align with industry needs and give graduates a clear path to workforce and economic success."

At the high school level, career and technical education programs are arranged around 16 career clusters, which are broad occupational groupings such as architecture and construction, health science, or marketing. Career and technical education programs provide high school students with rigorous academic and technical preparation, career development, and opportunities to apply their academic skills in a business or industry setting. Because this model uses applied learning that is grounded in real-world occupational tasks, it often accelerates achievement for all students. Many students begin studying for a career while in high school and then continue into postsecondary education.

"To be college and career ready requires more than academic preparation," said Tony Evers, state superintendent of public instruction. "Studying a rigorous blend of academic and technical coursework, along with

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having the ability to apply these skills, is critical for students' postsecondary success. Career and technical education programs provide a practical and meaningful avenue to teach reading, writing, mathematics, and science in addition to developing creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork skills valued by employers."

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin Technical College System are working together to highlight February's Career and Technical Education Month observance. Clancy and Evers will appear in a video featuring facts about career and technical education in Wisconsin. They also will create a public service announcement and make a joint visit to the DC Everest School District. This event will highlight Wisconsin being named one of six states to receive a federal grant to explore high school and technical college connections for programs in advanced manufacturing.

"CTE: Learning Today, Earning Tomorrow!" is the theme for this year's observance. For more information about Career and Technical Education Month activities in Wisconsin, please contact your local school district or technical college.

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NOTES: This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpinr2011_11.pdf. Additional information about Career and Technical Education Month is available at <http://www.acteonline.org/ctemonth.aspx>.